

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS

OF

The Victoria Institute,

OR,

Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

VOL. LIX.



LONDON:

(Published by the Institute, 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, S.W.1.)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

1927

698TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM D, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, MARCH 21st, 1927,

AT 4.30 P.M.

WILLIAM C. EDWARDS, ESQ., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed, and the CHAIRMAN introduced the Rev. A. H. Finn to read his paper on "The Predictive Element in Holy Scripture."

THE PREDICTIVE ELEMENT IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

By THE REV. A. H. FINN.

IT is generally agreed that there are predictions in the Bible, and most of us are familiar with the more important, yet perhaps it is not commonly realized how very largely that predictive element enters into the whole of Scripture and how wide is its range. Predictions vary in point of time from the immediate future to the utmost limits of time: in significance, from what seem mere trifles to matters of the most tremendous import. Who would have supposed that it could be worth while recording that one man told another that the same day he would meet two men at one place, three at another, and a company

at a third, and that in connection with so small a matter as the search for some strayed asses? Yet that is what Samuel told Saul (1 Sam. x, 2, 3, 5).

There are then forecasts of events to occur speedily. Moses is told that Aaron would come to meet him (Exod. iv, 14), and each of the Ten Plagues, especially the last, is announced beforehand. Then there are the dividing of the Red Sea and destruction of the Egyptians (Exod. xiv, 16, 17); the sending of manna (Exod. xvi, 4), quails (Exod. xvi, 12; Num. xi, 18), and water out of the rock (Exod. xvii, 6; Num. xx, 8); the theophany at Sinai (Exod. xix, 11); the cutting off of Jordan (Joshua iii, 13); the fall of Jericho (Joshua vi, 5) and of Ai (Joshua viii, 2); the victory of 300 over the hosts of Midian (Judges vii, 7); Saul's coming to Samuel (1 Sam. ix, 15, 16); the thunderstorm in wheat harvest (1 Sam. xii, 16); the death of Saul and his sons (1 Sam. xxviii, 19); the death of Bathsheba's child (2 Sam. xii, 14); the rout of the Syrian army (1 Kings xx, 13); the taking away of Elijah (2 Kings ii, 3); the raising of the siege of Samaria, and death of the incredulous lord (2 Kings vii, 1, 2); the failure of Rabshakeh's threats (2 Kings xix, 32); and a double victory over Philistines (1 Chron. xiv, 10, 15).

All these were to occur very shortly, within a few hours or, at most, days; others after somewhat longer intervals. Thus, the Deluge to come in seven days (Gen. vii, 4); the births of Isaac (Gen. xviii, 10) and of Samson (Judges xiii, 5); the promotion of Pharaoh's butler and execution of the baker (Gen. xl, 13, 19); seven years plenty and seven years famine (Gen. xli, 26, 27); Moses and Aaron not to enter the Promised Land (Num. xx, 12); Sisera delivered into the hands of a woman (Judges iv, 9); deliverance from Midian (Judges vi, 14) and from Philistines (Judges xiii, 5); death of Hophni and Phineas (1 Sam. ii, 34); ravens to feed Elijah (1 Kings xvii, 4); a seven years' famine (2 Kings viii, 1); Jehu's successors to the fourth generation (2 Kings x, 30).

Others again involved still longer delay. The first warning to Noah of the Deluge (Gen. vi, 13) was probably given a good part of a century before the catastrophe (*cf.* Gen. v, 32; vii, 11): the servitude of Israel and the return to Canaan were announced to Abraham (Gen. xv, 13, 16) centuries beforehand: the subjection of Esau to Jacob was declared before their birth (Gen. xxv, 23), and again by Isaac (Gen. xxvii, 40), but not brought about till David's time (2 Sam. viii, 14): Israel's return to Canaan

was foreseen by Joseph (Gen. l, 24) : the secession of the Northern tribes after his death was made known to Solomon (1 Kings xi, 13) : Jeroboam is warned of the destruction of his Bethel sanctuary which took place three centuries later (1 Kings xiii, 2) : the extermination of the houses of Jeroboam (1 Kings xiv, 10) and Baasha (1 Kings xvi, 3), and the fates of Ahab and Jezebel and their posterity (1 Kings xxi, 19-23) are foretold ; as also the deaths of Jehoram (2 Chron. xxi, 15) and Amaziah (2 Chron. xxv, 16). The oft-repeated promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that their descendants should be greatly multiplied and inherit the land, were only fulfilled centuries later. The forecasts of Ishmael's future (Gen. xvi, 10 ; xvii, 20) and that of the Twelve Tribes in the Blessings of Jacob (Gen. xlix) and Moses (Deut. xxxiii) all relate to a far-distant future.

Those who are anxious to get rid of or minimize anything like prediction, contend that, as the histories were not drawn up till long after, these seeming predictions were not really uttered, being only due to the pious (ought it not to be impious ?) imaginings of the writers who set down what they thought ought to have been or might have been foretold. That really amounts to an accusation of wholesale fraud on the part of the Jewish historians. If all the Higher Critical theories were sound, it would mean that all the various authors of the J, E, and P histories, the author of D, and those of the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were so unscrupulous or so besotted as to record as facts what were only dreams, and so profane as to put their own fabrications into the mouth of the Most High.

What is more to our immediate purpose is to note that, even if this sweeping indictment of the truth of the writers could be maintained, there would still remain predictions which **cannot** possibly be so accounted for. The promise of the victorious Seed of the woman (Gen. iii, 15) : the promise that in the Seed of Abraham all nations of the earth should be blessed (Gen. xii, 2) ; and that out of Judah should come a royal Lawgiver to whom should be the gatherings of the peoples (Gen. xlix, 10) : Balaam's confident expectation of the Star, the Sceptre out of Israel ; and the wasting of Moab, Edom, Amalek, and Asshur (Num. xxiv, 17-24) : the promise of a Prophet like unto Moses (Deut. xviii, 15, 18) : the promise to David of a house, kingdom, and throne "for ever" : all these duly came to pass, but not till long after the Old Testament was completed. More than that, there are matters which stretch out to times that are still future. There is

no reason to suppose that the sentences pronounced on Adam and Eve (Gen. iii, 16, 19) will cease to operate as long as mankind exists, or that the promise of seedtime and harvest will fail "while the earth remaineth" (Gen. viii, 22): the filling of the earth "with the glory of the LORD" (Num. xiv, 21; cf. Isa. xi, 9; Hab. ii, 14) has yet to come: the restoration of Israel from "the outmost parts of heaven" (Deut. xxx, 3-5) has not yet been accomplished: "the LORD shall" indeed "judge the ends of the earth" (1 Sam. ii, 10), but the time is not yet. It is not possible to eradicate prediction, even from the historical books of the Old Testament.

Turning now to the books avowedly prophetic, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Micah are full of denunciations of the wickedness of their people; idolatry, murder, theft, licentiousness, greed are rampant in the land, though the outward observances of religion—festivals, fasts, solemn assemblies, sacrifices, prayers—are punctiliously observed. Therefore there are also fervent exhortations to repentance and amendment, together with stern warnings of wrath and bitter punishments awaiting impenitence. So far the view that the prophets were preachers of morality whose messages were addressed to their own generation is justified. Yet there are also passages which go much further. The warnings of disaster are not merely couched in general terms such as modern preachers might use in denouncing the evils of to-day: often the precise quarter from which retribution will come is specified, and, sometimes, that quarter an altogether unexpected one. Isaiah, for instance, while the Assyrian power was still dominant, points in plainest words (xxxix, 6, 7) to captivity in Babylon, then almost insignificant; and with this his contemporary, Micah, agrees (iv, 10). Hosea, addressing the Northern tribes, points indeed to Assyria, but speaks definitely of deportation (x, 6; xi, 5), which could hardly have been anticipated in his day. Amos is even more precise, specifying "captivity beyond Damascus" (v, 27). In Jeremiah's day, no doubt the power of Babylon was nearly at its height, yet how could he have anticipated Nebuchadnezzar's successful invasion of Egypt (xliii, 8-10; xlvi, 25, 26)? or how could Ezekiel have done so while far off in Babylonia (xxix, 19; xxx, 10)?

In the prophetic books, as in the historical, there are predictions speedily fulfilled. Isaiah announces to Hezekiah his recovery and prolongation of life (xxxviii, 5): Jeremiah tells Hananiah he should die that year (xxviii, 16); is forewarned of the coming of

his cousin, Hanameel (xxxviii, 5); and foretells the indignities inflicted on Jehoiakim's corpse (xxii, 18, 19; xxxvi, 30): Daniel warns Nebuchadnezzar of impending madness (iv, 25), and Belshazzar of the fall of his kingdom (v, 28) which took place that very night.

Then events somewhat more distant:—Isaiah is aware of the future desolation of Judæa (vi, 11), of the spoiling of Samaria (viii, 4; also Mic. i, 6), of the killing of Sennacherib (xxxii, 8; xxxvii, 7), of Israel's escape from Babylon (xlviii, 20): Jeremiah foresees the destruction of the Temple (vii, 14: xxvi, 6; also Ezek. xxiv, 21), Jerusalem made heaps (ix, 11), and Babylonian captivity (xx, 4; also Mic. iv, 10), the carrying away of the Temple vessels (xxvii, 21, 22), and the taking of Babylon by Medes (li, 11, 28): Amos knows of the destruction of the Bethel altars (iii, 14): Habakkuk tells of an invasion by Chaldeans (i, 6-8).

It may, of course, be asserted that these are interpolations written after the event and foisted into the earlier writings. If that were true, one could only wonder at the interpolators' idea of honesty and truth, and at the perverse industry which fabricated pretended predictions in such wholesale profusion. But what is to be said of predictions which came true ages afterwards, long after interpolation had become impossible? Take, for instance, the fate of surrounding nations. Desolations and destructions are foretold for Moab by Isaiah (xv, xvi), Jeremiah (xlviii, 9-29), Amos (ii, 1-3), and Zephaniah (ii, 9): for Damascus by Isaiah (xvii), Jeremiah (xlix, 23-27), and Amos (i, 3-5): for Egypt by Isaiah (xix), Ezekiel (xxix, 9-12), and Joel (iii, 19): for Ammon by Jeremiah (xlix, 1-6), Ezekiel (xxv, 2-7), Amos (i, 13-15), and Zephaniah (ii, 8, 9): for Edom by Jeremiah (xlix, 7-22), Ezekiel (xxv, 12-14), Joel (iii, 19), and Amos (i, 11, 12): for the Philistines by Jeremiah (xlvii, 4-7), Ezekiel (xxv, 15-17), Amos (i, 6-8), and Zephaniah (ii, 4-7): for Tyre by Isaiah (xxiii), Ezekiel (xxvi, xxvii), Joel (iii, 4-8), and Amos (i, 9, 10). The dispersion of Israel throughout all the world is referred to by Isaiah (xi, 11, 12), Jeremiah (ix, 16; xxx, 11), Ezekiel (vi, 8, 9; xxvi, 19), Joel (iii, 2), and Zechariah (vii, 14). How truly all these have come to pass, let the present state of the world attest, yet not till long after the Old Testament was completed. It is also worth noting how often different prophets corroborate one another, yet clearly without collusion, since their statements are by no means identical.

Even more important is the long list of Messianic prophecies. Passing over some whose precise meaning has been disputed (such as

“ a Virgin shall conceive ”), it cannot be denied that Isaiah has a good deal about a descendant of David, “ out of the stem of Jesse,” a Branch “ out of his roots ” (xi, 1), specially endowed with “ the Spirit of Jehovah ” (xi, 2), who should rule in righteousness (xi, 4), to whom “ the Gentiles should seek ” (xi, 10), a King who “ shall reign in righteousness.” (xxxii, 1). In the later part of the book there is the marvellous delineation of the Servant of Jehovah, of whom it is said, “ I have put My Spirit upon Him : He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles ” (xlii, 1) : who was to be unobtrusive (xlii, 2), patient and forbearing with the bruised and dimly burning (xlii, 3) “ till He have set judgment in the earth ” (xlii, 4) : He would be obedient to the Lord Jehovah, even to enduring “ shame and spitting ” (l, 5, 6) : His visage would be “ marred more than man ” (lii, 14) : He was to be “ despised and rejected . . . wounded . . . bruised . . . oppressed . . . afflicted . . . taken from prison and judgment . . . to make His grave with the wicked and with the rich ” (liii, 3-9) : all this was to be for the transgressions and iniquities of others (liii, 5), Himself being innocent of violence or deceit (liii, 9) : in the end He would be “ satisfied ” (liii, 11), and have His portion “ with the great and . . . with the strong ” (liii, 12) : the benefits were to be for all mankind, for He was to be “ for a covenant of the People, for a light of the Gentiles ” (xlii, 6), not only “ to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel,” but “ a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth ” (xlix, 6). As we have already seen, it is said of the Servant, “ I have put My Spirit upon Him ” (xlii, 1), and that is referred to in “ The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me ; because Jehovah hath annointed Me to preach good tidings ” (lxi, 1). He is, then, the herald that “ bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ” (lii, 7), and the good tidings which Zion and Jerusalem were to re-echo was “ Behold your God. Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come with strong hand ” (xl, 9, 10), though also as a gentle Shepherd (xl, 11), and therefore the voice in the wilderness was to cry “ Prepare ye the way of Jehovah ” (xl, 3).

Though the figures of the King in the earlier part and of the Servant afterwards seem to differ so much, yet they have certain characteristics in common : each is to be markedly endowed with the Spirit (xi, 2 ; xlii, 1 ; lxi, 1) ; to establish righteousness and justice (xi, 4 ; xlii, 4) ; and to attract the Gentiles (xi, 10 ; xlii, 6 ; xlix, 6). There is reason to think that both titles belong to one and the same Person.

Jeremiah again has, "the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch [the same word as "the Branch of Jehovah" (Isa. iv, 2)], and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (xxiii, 5), whose Name will be "Jehovah our Righteousness" (xxiii, 6). Ten chapters further on (xxxiii, 15, 16) the promise is repeated in slightly different form, followed immediately by an assurance (xxxiii, 17, 18) that "David shall never want a man upon the throne . . . neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before Me . . . to do sacrifice continually," a double promise suggesting a combination of kingly and priestly functions. For the next indication we must look back to Isaiah's saying that the Servant should be "for a covenant of the People" (xlii, 6; xlix, 8), and "this is My covenant with them, saith Jehovah" that His Spirit and His words should not depart "from henceforth and for ever" (lix, 21). When, then, Jeremiah says, "I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel . . . I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (xxxii, 31, 33), and "I will make an everlasting Covenant with them" (xxxii, 40), it is evidently a reference to the work of the Servant. Ezekiel, too, promises a "new heart" and a "new spirit" (xi, 19; xxxvi, 26, 27), and "an everlasting Covenant" (xvi, 60; xxxvii, 26). Also he has Isaiah's thought of Jehovah as the Shepherd: "I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah" (xxxiv, 15). Daniel interprets the Stone "cut out without hands," which "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (ii, 34, 35), as meaning that in the days of the fourth kingdom "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (ii, 44), indicating an universal King not of merely human origin. Also he records the definite message of Gabriel, that "Seventy weeks are determined . . . to seal up [*i.e.* close and confirm] the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy"; that "after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off," and after that "the city and sanctuary shall be destroyed"; that "He [the Messiah] shall confirm the Covenant with many," and "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (ix, 24-27). Micah tells of One "to be ruler in Israel"—which the Jews of Herod's time understood as meaning "the King of the Jews"—"Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (v, 2). The post-exilic prophets supply some remarkable details. Haggai predicts that the Second Temple should be filled with

glory, so that "the glory of this latter House shall be greater than of the former, saith Jehovah of hosts, and in this place will I give peace" (ii, 9). Since the Temple of Solomon (to whose name the giving of "peace" alludes) was filled with "the glory of Jehovah" (1 Kings viii, 11), the greater glory can only refer to a yet more marvellous Divine Presence of One "greater than Solomon." Zechariah has, "behold, I bring forth My Servant the Branch" (iii, 8), thus identifying the "Branch of Jehovah" of Isa. iv, 2, with the Servant of Jehovah of the later chapters. Then he is commanded to say that "the Man whose name is The Branch" is to "sit and rule upon His throne, and He shall be a priest upon His throne" (vi, 12, 13), combining the offices of priest and king (as suggested by Jer. xxxiii, 17, 18), and the combination will be "the counsel of peace." This priestly office of "My Servant the Branch" accounts for and explains His making "His soul an offering [*asham*, a guilt-offering] for sin" (Isa. liii, 10). Also, Zion and Jerusalem are to rejoice because "thy King cometh unto thee: He is just and having Salvation" (Zech. ix, 9), a righteous King as in Isaiah and Jeremiah. Moreover, "He shall speak peace to the heathen, and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea" (ix, 10), a marked relation to the Gentiles included in world-wide rule. Malachi, like Isaiah, speaks of the Messenger who "shall prepare the way before Me," for "the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His Temple" (iii, 1), explaining Haggai's filling the House with glory.

Now none of all these sayings can possibly be interpolations, for, long before anything corresponding to them had occurred, the Jews are witnesses that they belong to the original writings. Yet, unless the Gospel narratives are shameless fabrications, it cannot be denied that they were completely verified. At the time indicated by Daniel, a Child, a descendant of David, afterwards repeatedly hailed as "Son of David," was born "in the city of David": received homage from Chaldean pilgrims as "born King of the Jews": and accused by His enemies of claiming to be Christ—anointed—a King. The name given Him was "Jehovah is Salvation." His public ministry was ushered in by one who cried in the wilderness "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," whose message was "the Kingdom of Heaven [that foretold by Daniel] is at hand": He Himself diligently preached the Kingdom, and when on trial claimed that He was a King "not of this world." By Jews and Samaritans He was acknowledged to be Messiah—the Christ, the Anointed, and publicly He claimed

for Himself the prophecy of Isa. lxi, 1. He avowed Himself more than human by claiming to be Lord of the Sabbath and able to forgive sins; accepted without protest on more than one occasion (Matt. xvi, 16; John xi, 27) the witness of followers, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God"; and was charged by His enemies with making Himself equal with God. He called Himself the Good Shepherd, seeking out the lost sheep, especially of the house of Israel. At the same time He avowed Himself a Servant who came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister,"—"among you as he that serveth"—taking upon Himself "the form of a servant."

He was undoubtedly despised and rejected, subjected to shame and spitting, cut off out of the land of the living, numbered among the transgressors, and buried in a rich man's tomb. He inaugurated a New Covenant in His Blood (Matt. xxvi, 28). It is mere matter of history that city and sanctuary were destroyed, that sacrifice and oblation have ceased, that the Gentiles have sought to His standard, and that He has been "a Light to lighten the Gentiles." All the varied traits foreshadowed by the prophets are found combined in JESUS of Nazareth and in Him alone. No wonder He could say of the Old Testament Scriptures, "they are they which testify of Me" (John v, 39), and appeal to the united witness of Law, Prophets, and Psalms (Luke xxiv, 44).

Besides fulfilled predictions, there are others looking forward to ages yet to come. The ultimate restoration of Israel to their land is confidently anticipated by Isaiah (xi, 12; xxvii, 12, 13), Jeremiah (xxx, 3; xxxi, 8; xxxiii, 7), Ezekiel (xi, 17; xxviii, 25; xxxvi, 24), and Zephaniah (iii, 20), and that as a united nation, the breach between North and South being healed (Isa. xi, 13; Jer. iii, 18; Ezek. xxxvii, 19; Hos. i, 11). Physical marvels are predicted:—the wilderness is to be made fertile (Isa. xxxv, 1, 2; xlii, 19, 20; lv, 13), and Palestine even more so (Isa. li, 3; Exek. xxxvi, 35): wild beasts are to lose their power to harm (Isa. xi, 6-8; lxxv, 25): sun, moon, and stars are to be darkened (Isa. xliii, 10; xxiv, 23; Joel ii, 31; iii, 15): the heavens and earth are to be shaken (Isa. xliii, 13; Jer. iv, 23, 24; Hag. ii, 6): a new heaven and earth (Isa. lxxv, 17; lxxvi, 22), and a terrible "day of the Lord" are to come (Isa. ii, 12, 21; Joel ii, 1, 2, 11; Amos v, 18; Zeph. i, 7, 14, 15; Mal. iv, 1). Then death will be swallowed up in victory (Isa. xxv, 8; Hos. xliii, 14): all nations will worship God (Isa. lxxvi, 23;

Jer. iii, 17) : and there will be a resurrection to judgment (Dan. xii, 2 ; Joel iii, 2, 12).

Here, then, we have a number of men of differing temperaments—think of the difference between Isaiah and Jeremiah—in different circumstances, living in different ages and, to some extent, in different regions. Yet they express themselves with quiet certainty and to much the same purport about the distant future, far beyond human ken. How could this be possible, unless they were controlled by one over-ruling Mind ? and whose mind could that be but God's ? He alone can declare “the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done” (Isa. xlvi, 10 ; *cf.* Acts xv, 18), who declares new things when “the former things are come to pass” (Isa. xlii, 9), and challenges all others to do the like “that we may know that ye are gods” (Isa. xli, 22, 23). That they were so controlled is exactly what the prophets themselves affirm, constantly and consistently attributing their utterances to a Higher Power with an emphatic “Thus saith the LORD.”

Hebrew poetry as well as history and prophecy has its predictions. The Song of Moses tells of judgment (Deut. xxxii, 35, 41) and of the nations rejoicing with God's People (Deut. xxxii, 43). The “last words of David” speak of a perfectly just ruler and an everlasting covenant (2 Sam. xxiii, 3-5). Psalms ii, xlv, lxii, set before us a King of superhuman power and existence : ii, lxxxix, cxxxii, the Anointed of Jehovah : xxiii, lxxx, the Shepherd : lxxxix, the Seed of David. There are many references to God judging the earth (*e.g.* lxvii, 4 ; xcvi, 13), and to the nations worshipping God (*e.g.* xxii, 27 ; lxxxvi, 9). Psalms xxii, lxix, cix, depict the Innocent Sufferer ; and Ps. cx, an enthroned, victorious Priest-King. Job is confident that his Redeemer “shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,” and that after death “in my flesh shall I see God” (xix, 25-27).

It is none otherwise in the New Testament. Events to occur shortly are foretold :—The birth of a son to Zachariah (Luke i, 13), and to Mary (Matt. i, 21) ; the finding of the ass-colt in the highway (Mark xi, 2), and the meeting a man carrying a pitcher of water (Luke xxii, 10) ; the warning of the Betrayal (Matt. xxvi, 21), and of Peter's denials (Mark xiv, 30) ; and the promise of baptism “with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts i, 5). St. Peter announces the immediate death of Sapphira (Acts v, 9), and St. Paul, the blinding of Elymas (Acts xiii, 11), and that there would be no loss of life in the shipwreck (Acts xxvii, 22).

Then there are events somewhat more distant:—The Baptist announces the coming of One who “shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire . . . thoroughly purge His floor . . . and burn up the chaff” (Matt. iii, 11, 12): Zachariah forecasts the future of his son (Luke i, 76–9): Simeon declares that the Child in his arms will be a Light of the Gentiles and the glory of Israel (Luke ii, 32), while a sword shall pierce the Mother’s soul (Luke ii, 35): Our Lord announces that “the Son of Man will be lifted up” (John iii, 14) and so “will draw all men unto Me” (John xii, 32); foretells His own Passion and Resurrection before the Transfiguration (Matt. xvi, 21), on the road to Jerusalem (Matt. xx, 18, 19), and just before the Passover (Matt. xxvi, 2); laments over the desolation of Jerusalem (Matt. xxiii, 38; Luke xiii, 34, 35); foretells the siege of Jerusalem (Luke xix, 43, 44), and the utter destruction of the Temple (Mark xiii, 2): Agabus predicts famine (Acts xi, 28) and the binding of Paul (Acts xxi, 11): St. Paul is marked out as Apostle of the Gentiles (Acts ix, 15; xxii, 21) even at Rome (Acts xxiii, 11) and before Cæsar (Acts xxvii, 24): St. Paul tells the Ephesians they should see his face no more, and grievous wolves would attack the flock (Acts xx, 25, 29). Then there are events far distant. Our Lord tells how He will reject workers of iniquity though they had called Him “Lord” (Matt. vii, 23): denounces woe on Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum “in the day of judgment” (Matt. xi, 21–24); speaks of the harvest at the end of the world (Matt. xiii, 39, 40); says much in the Olivet discourse (Matt. xxiv; Mark xiii, Luke xxi) of terrors and sorrows in the latter days, of the coming of false Christs, and of the Gospel being preached in all the world: the angels tell how “this same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner” (Acts i, 11): St. Paul warns the Athenians of judgment of the world and resurrection of the dead (Acts xvii, 18, 31). Many are the forebodings of the last days in the Epistles: anticipations of perilous times (2 Thess. ii, 3–10; 1 Tim. iv, 1; 2 Tim. iii, 1; 2 Pet. iii, 3): of the Second Advent (1 Cor. iv, 5: xv, 23; Phil. iii, 20; Col. iii, 4; 1 Thess. iii, 13: iv, 15, 16; 2 Thess. i, 7, 10: ii, 1; 1 Tim. vi, 14; Titus ii, 13: Jas. v, 7, 8; 1 Pet. v, 4; 1 John ii, 28; Jude, 14): of the Resurrection (Rom. vi, 8: viii, 11; 1 Cor. vi, 14: xv, 21, 42; 2 Cor. iv, 14; Phil. iii, 11, 21; 1 Thess. iv, 16; Heb. vi, 2): of Judgment (Rom. ii, 5: xiv, 10; 1 Cor. iii, 13; 2 Cor. v, 10; Heb. vi, 2: ix, 27: x, 27; 1 Pet. iv, 17, 18; Jude, 6, 15): of the salvation of Israel (Rom. xi, 26) and of Gentiles (Rom. xi, 25; 1 Cor. xii, 13; Gal. iii, 14): of future glory (Rom. viii, 18: ix, 23;

1 Cor. xv, 49 ; 2 Cor. iii, 18 ; Col. iii, 4) and reward (1 Cor. ix, 25 ; 2 Tim. iv, 8 ; Jas. i, 12 ; 1 Pet. v, 4).

Whatever view is taken of the Apocalypse, it is fairly clear that there are matters in it which are still in the future. The rewards promised to those who overcome (Rev. ii, 7, 10, 11, 17, 26 ; iii, 5, 12, 21) have not yet been bestowed : only by a very strained interpretation can it be made out that the thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints while Satan is bound (xx, 2-4) refers to the present : the first and second resurrection (xx, 4, 12) have not occurred : the new Jerusalem (xxi, 2) has not descended from Heaven, nor are the new Heaven and new earth yet in existence (xxi, 1). Some nowadays deny that the Second Advent, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the general Judgment will ever take place, yet the apostolic writers had their Master's authority for expecting them.

It is also sometimes asserted that there are predictions in the Bible which cannot possibly be fulfilled. It would be interesting to have a list of them, and I personally must confess my ignorance of which they may be. However, we may notice a couple which may be deemed highly improbable. There is the cleaving of the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv, 4), half removing to the north and half to the south, forming "a very great valley," which also seems to be implied in Ezekiel's river (xlvi, 1, 8) issuing from the Temple and flowing to the Dead Sea. Anyone who has seen how the great bulk of Olivet blocks the way may well wonder what tremendous convulsion could accomplish this. Yet considering what has happened in recent years at Krakatoa and Mt. Pelée, and how little we know of the power of seismic forces, it would be rash to assert that it can never take place. Again, we are assured that "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Pet. iii, 12 : cf. Ps. cii, 2 ; Isa. li, 6). Scientists, on the contrary, have calculated that in the course of ages the earth will cool till it becomes a frozen planet like the moon. That however, assumes the undisturbed continuance of present conditions. What would happen if a great comet, perhaps one not yet known, or the earth itself, were drawn into the sun ? Can that be pronounced impossible ?

Fault is found with the prediction of a distant future in minute detail. Critics consider that the sketch of events in Dan. viii and xi is so accurate about that which happened in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes that it must have been written after the

event, and they roundly assert that such detailed prediction is "out of harmony with the analogy of prophecy" (Driver, *L.O.T.*, p. 509). Yet many of the passages already cited contain precise details, and there are others. The horrors described in Deut. xxviii, 49-57, were literally carried out in the Roman siege of Jerusalem, and not before: the utter desolation of Babylon, a dwelling-place for wild beasts, is foretold by Isaiah (xiii, 21) and Jeremiah (li, 37): Jeremiah predicts that the Captivity would last 70 years (xxv, 11, 12), and gives a vivid description of Babylon captured by surprise, "taken at one end" (li, 31, 32): Ezekiel says that Tyre would be a place for "the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea" (xxvi, 5): Micah specifies the birthplace of Christ (v, 2), and speaks of Zion becoming "as a plowed field" (iii, 12), which actually was its condition till recently; Psalms xxii, lxix, and Isa. liii, give many details in the sufferings of our Lord; Zechariah mentions the riding on an ass-colt (ix, 9), the 30 pieces of silver cast to the potter in the house of the Lord (xi, 12, 13), the piercing (xii, 10), and the wounds in the hands (xiii, 6). Our Lord foretells that Mary's anointing should be told in all the world (Matt. xxvi, 13), and that not one stone of the Temple should be left on another (Mark xiii, 2). 1 Thes. iv, 17, declares that at our Lord's return the saints who are alive will be caught up in the air, and 2 Thes. ii, 3-8, has a detailed account of the Man of Sin and his fate. Isaiah predicts that the gates of Jerusalem should be "open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night" (lx, 11), and Zechariah that it should be "inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein" (ii, 4), full of old men and old women, boys and girls (viii, 4, 5). These conditions have been most surprisingly brought about, but only within the last few years. So far from minute detail being "out of harmony with the analogy of prophecy," it would be truer to say that it is strikingly characteristic of a very great deal of Biblical prophecy as contrasted with the vague generalities of heathen oracles.

It only remains to consider briefly two points about unfulfilled prophecy:—

(1) Jeremiah states expressly that God's promises of blessings and threats of punishment are conditional (xviii, 6-10), the promises on man's faithfulness, the threats on obstinate impenitence (*see also* Lev. xxvi, 3, 21; Deut. xxviii, 1, 2, 15; Ps. lxxxix, 30). Therefore it was that Jonah's prediction, "Yet

forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (iii, 4, 10) was averted by the repentance of the Ninevites.

(2) Precise predictions have been so brought about in unexpected fashion that the very witnesses of the event failed, at least for the time, to realize that it was the fulfilment of prophecy. Thus, about so distinctive a matter as the entry into Jerusalem riding on an ass, we are told, "These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him" (John xii, 16). It would seem then that predictions have been given, not so much to enable us to anticipate history, as to recognize, when the fulfilment comes, that "this is the LORD'S doing: it is marvellous in our eyes" (Ps. cxviii, 23). We should be very chary of putting our own interpretation on prophecy, and insisting that only so can it come to pass.

To sum up:—Prediction is no insignificant, negligible element in Scripture; it pervades the whole Bible, both Old and New Testaments. It is as a golden thread running throughout a closely-woven fabric. To tear it out forcibly would be to reduce the seamless garment to rags and tatters.

The Predictive Element in Holy Scripture is a part, a very important part, of the hall-mark which stamps the whole Bible as the "fine gold" of God's Word, not the dross of men's imaginings.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN said: It is a long time since I have listened to a paper so entirely delightful. We have had brought before us, as in a panorama, Biblical history and holy prophecy. From my youth I have been taught to regard prophecy as one of the evidences of the divine authorship of Holy Scripture, just in the same way as we looked upon the signs and miracles of the Apostles as proving their holy calls and offices. To that view I still sincerely subscribe. I remember very well with what horror and concern I heard, for the first time, a student of divinity call this in question, and advance his blasphemous modernisms.

Spurgeon once gave his students a parable of the way in which

Modernists gave up one position after the other to the enemy : " Imagine a man driving in a sledge with his wife and family, which includes an infant in arms and several children. He is followed by a howling pack of wolves. He *must* pacify them, so he throws the baby to them ; they stop for a moment, but only for a moment, and one by one he throws out the other children. Last of all, the brave (?) man makes a supreme sacrifice, and throws out his wife." Let us hope that at last the wolves got him !

Thus the Modernists seek to conciliate the sceptics, by surrendering precious doctrines or parts of Holy Scripture one after another. It is all in vain, for nothing but total apostasy will satisfy the dragon of unbelief. The first Higher Critic was that evil intelligence who inquired : " Yea, hath God said ? " I affirm my settled conviction that this attack upon Holy Scripture and prophecy, in its genesis, continuance and development, is Satanic. This came to me very strongly years ago when reading Cheyne. He said that *he* thought that the children of Israel came from *Mizrim* (a part of Arabia adjoining Egypt), but *they* thought that they came from Egypt (*Mizraim*), and he added : " The whole story of the Exodus from Egypt appears to be due to a confusion between *Mizraim* and *Mizrim*." I submit that this was an absurd and monstrous proposition, formed only as an attack on Holy Scripture. As I read those words I espied the cloven hoof, and said to myself, " That is Satan's work ; it is not human but *sub-human*."

There is a prophecy that I should like to add to the long list of the paper. It is found in Jer. xxxiv, 3-5, where it is prophesied to the King Zedekiah that he " shall not be slain, but shall see the king of Babylon's eyes, and speak mouth to mouth," and " *thou shalt go to Babylon.*" Compare this with Ezek. xii, 13 : " I will bring him (the king of Judah) to Babylon, yet shall he not see it, though he die there." Now turn to Josephus (*Ant.*, Bk. x, c. viii, sec. 2), and see how Ezekiel sent his prophecy to Jerusalem. It is an interesting speculation to inquire if Jeremiah ever met Ezekiel in the flesh. Anyway, we have the record that at least once Jeremiah was commissioned to go to Babylonia (Jer. xiii, 4-7).

Regarding the " Virgin's " prophecy, I have before me *Origen Against Celsus*, and there the Jew attacks the prophecy of the Virgin Birth of our Blessed Lord. Origen replies by asking : " What sign

could a young woman conceiving be, if it were not meant of a Virgin ? ” (Bk. 1, ch. 30).

Mr. AVARY H. FORBES : The subject is a gigantic one, and has been the *pièce de résistance* of hundreds of volumes, or, rather, of libraries. Prophecies relating to the Jewish race alone would require a large octavo. Mr. Finn has treated the subject with wonderful and pregnant brevity and marshalled his materials with admirable tact.

From a paper read here a month ago we saw how the prophecies of Ezekiel foretold that Egypt should become a “ base ” kingdom (ch. xxix), a prediction surprisingly fulfilled over the last two thousand years and more, during which time Egypt was never an independent country, while for many centuries she was ruled by usurping *slaves*.

That was prophecy on a large scale, but when we descend to details, then the improbability of correctly forestalling the future, or hitting upon it by chance, is enormously increased. Isaiah liii furnishes us with an example ; the whole chapter is a miraculously true prediction of Christ’s career and character, but it contains a detail which is often overlooked : “ He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.” Placing the making of the grave *before* the death sounds strange. But the Romans, though great lawyers, were a cruel people, and often, to increase the agony of the victim, they dug his grave in front of the cross, so that while dying he might contemplate it. Christ’s grave was, no doubt, dug between those of the two malefactors, but He was not buried there. He was “ with the rich ”—Joseph of Arimathea—“ in his death.”

My friend, Rev. Francis Denman, has pointed out that prediction sometimes lies concealed in a *name*. When the first woman was created, Adam called her *Isshah*, “ from, or for man.” But after the Fall, when *death* had entered the world, he called her Eve (Heb., *Chavah*), the “ living one ” or “ life,” pointing to her Posterity, who would bring “ life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” “ Jonah ” means “ a dove,” yet Jonah was the least dove-like of all the prophets : he was, indeed, a surly and disobedient man ! Yet, before he penned the Book of Jonah, he must have become contrite and humble to a degree ; as no Jew would “ wear his heart upon his sleeve,” or draw such a humiliating picture of himself without

any feature in his favour—as Jonah does—unless he had really become a dove-like character. Simon was christened by our Lord “*Petros*,” a “stone” or “rock,” yet Peter was *then* anything but a “rock.” It was not till after Christ’s Death, Resurrection and Ascension that Peter began to justify his new name.

The futility of man, apart from revelation, trying to foretell the future is well illustrated by some of our statesmen. The younger Pitt was brought up from his cradle in the very thick of statesmanship. He was, moreover, an exceedingly talented young man and became Prime Minister at the age of twenty-four. If any man could forecast the political future it was surely William Pitt, who was perfectly familiar with both foreign and domestic politics. The French Revolution broke out in 1789, and in introducing his Budget in 1792, Pitt, after predicting that the troubles in France would terminate “in general harmony and regular order,” said “unquestionably there was never a time when, from the situation of Europe, we might reasonably expect fifteen years of peace than at the present moment.” In the very next year, 1793, Britain was drawn into the great Napoleonic wars, which only ended with Waterloo twenty-two years later! Even after war was declared, Pitt was as blind as ever as regards the future. “It will be a short war,” he said, “and certainly end in one or two short campaigns.”

Are we any better prophets now? In January, 1914, Mr. Lloyd George declared that never had there been a more suitable time for disarmament; and within seven months we were sending the greatest army we had ever raised to fight in the greatest war in history!

Lieut.-Colonel F. MOLONY said: We are indebted to our lecturer for a very striking gathering together of Biblical predictions. In the middle of the South African War I was at Hoopstad, in the Orange River Colony, with a moving column. One evening, after supper, the officers of the staff were chatting together, when one of them made a remark which I took to be derogatory to Holy Scripture. I asked him if he had ever compared the predictions in the Bible about the great nations of antiquity with the subsequent fate of those nations, and he said “No.” Then General Sir Henry Settle broke in: “Well, this is something I do know about, having been so long in the East, and let me tell you that those predictions were fulfilled with marvellous exactness.”

Our lecturer has omitted the striking prediction in Nahum about the burning of Nineveh, and, though the date for the writings of that prophet given in our Bibles may be incorrect and ought to be put after 664 B.C., yet I have been told, on very good authority, that the book was undoubtedly written before Nineveh fell.

With reference to what our lecturer says at the middle of pp. 167 and 169 about wholesale fabrications of predictions—and limiting ourselves to predictions fulfilled before the time of Christ—we shall do well to stress the fact that the Jews were a very clever people and in the best position to know the facts, yet I am told on high authority that very few Jews have ever objected to the arguments brought forward by the lecturer. On the other hand, the facts he quotes certainly resulted in the Jews of our Lord's day having a wonderful confidence that all the predictions of the Old Testament would come true—a confidence surely caused by their experience that such had been the case throughout their history.

MR. THEODORE ROBERTS said: I welcome this paper; although it deals with only one point, and that hardly in the way of argument, the point itself is a very important one.

Education in the Roman world during the three centuries which succeeded the death of our Lord was more widely spread than ever before or since until the last hundred years, and during that period Christianity, by argument and persuasion alone (for no force was used, as in Mohammedanism), advanced from Pilate's sentence of crucifixion to the throne of the Roman world. Among the five causes by which the historian Gibbon seeks to account for this, the argument from the fulfilment of prophecy finds no place; and yet the Book of Acts shows that this was the means by which the first Evangelists persuaded men in the great centres of population of the Empire, such as Cæsaræa, Antioch in Pisidia, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus and Rome, that Jesus of Nazareth was the world's Saviour.

In his two interesting volumes entitled *Testimonies*, Dr. Rendel Harris has shown how the early Christians collected quotations from the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament as proof-texts for the convincement of Jews and Gentile proselytes. All this shows the importance of the predictive element in the Old Testament, and I regret that Mr. Finn has not elaborated a few salient proofs

instead of indiscriminately enumerating so many, among which a large number are necessarily not of equal value for the defence of the truth.

Principal Wheeler Robinson, in his recently published *Cross of the Servant* (in the Student Christian Movement series), denies that there is any predictive element in the later chapters of Isaiah; but he fails to account for the clear distinction made by the prophet between Jehovah's Servant and the nation of Israel, to whom the Servant is sent, and on whose behalf He suffers. Dr. Robinson is forced to argue that Israel's sufferings were vicarious for the Gentile nations, whereas these prophecies clearly show them to have been occasioned by Israel's own transgressions.

The real point of the predictive element in Scripture is that it compels the recognition of its divine inspiration—that is to say, that prophecy came, not by the will of man, but “men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. i, 21).

Mr. PERCY O. RUOFF said: This paper, concise and cogent in form, illustrates how impressive the argument for inspired prophecy is in the Bible. Even a superficial knowledge of Holy Scripture forces the reader to the conclusion that by far the largest portion of the Bible is taken up with the great subject of prophecy. And, moreover, the distance of time between the several prophetic writings and their extraordinary agreement forces the conclusion upon accurate students that the Bible is an organic unity and has one ultimate Author—God. If the predictive element were eliminated very large gaps in the literature would occur, and it is surprising how small the remaining writings would become. It is to be deprecated that the great, solemn and awe-inspiring subject of prophecy is often discussed in the spirit of a mathematical problem; it should ever be handled, on the contrary, in an attitude of deepest reverence, for this reason, that in all prediction, in the Bible sense, the quality of the foreknowledge of events is present. Foreknowledge is the prerogative of God alone.

Prophecy differs in its essence and features from shrewd views which are formed in advance of an event from a widely informed study of history. This difference may be seen clearly by an illustration. It does happen in the affairs of men that a first-class politician sometimes accurately outlines the features and

development of certain social movements, which subsequent history has fully justified. But the Bible predictions are different in kind rather than merely in degree. For instance, Micah prophesied (v. 2): "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah (Ephratah is added to distinguish it from the northern city of the same name), which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall the One come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are of old, from everlasting." In this instance a prediction is announced of the coming Messiah, historically about 700 years before the event, stating that Bethlehem, this particular inconsiderable place among the thousands of Judah, was to be the birthplace of the Messiah.

Take another instance. In the graphic, artless record of the crucifixion scene of the Son of God at Calvary, in the Gospel by John, it is expressly written: "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, 'I thirst.'" It is safe to say that every prophetic statement concerning the Christ had been, or was about to be, fulfilled when He uttered the words "It is finished," even to such minute details as His garments, His bones, His piercing, the vinegar, and His sayings on the Cross.

Now, in order to secure the fulfilment of prophetic utterance, there must be a guiding, governing hand in history, conditioning events, places and people. It would be as inconceivable for predictions to be fulfilled without superhuman power as it would be to conceive that if thousands of alphabets were thrown into the air they would fall in an ordered arrangement so as to form the wording of the Bible in their incidence. So, it may well be asked, whose power, whose prediction, whose government? Chance is out of the question. If, as the Scripture insists, all things that are written must be fulfilled, it must also be a fact that all things must have been foreknown, and, if foreknown, by whom? Is there any other answer which fits the question but the word "God"?

In a recent able book entitled *It is Written*, the Rev. G. T. Manley writes: "The principle which He (Christ) intended to enunciate appears to be that the written prophetic word possesses a reality, permanence and binding force which no opinion of man or process of time can undo, but that the unfolding revelation of history

is sure to explain and expand its meaning and confirm and substantiate its truth."

If it can be proved by satisfactory evidence that any of the predictions of the Bible have failed, it would, on account of the peculiar claims of the Book, invalidate it as the Word of God. If, on the other hand, its prophecies have had a substantial, verifiable body of historic fulfilment, it establishes its claims of superhuman origin.

Mr. W. Hoste remarked that in a paper read before the Institute last year the then lecturer said: "I doubt if we can maintain that any definite proposition was communicated by revelation" (*i.e.* to a prophet). I think Mr. Finn's paper is an adequate reply. It is hard to understand how anyone who had read the Bible with any attention could make such a statement.

The Modernist method to which Mr. Finn refers, of dealing with prophetic fulfilments as "interpolations," is imputing to the writers a "dodge" worthy of some little schoolboy "crib." The alternative plan of advancing the date of the Book merely begs the question. There are confessedly in Scripture many unfulfilled prophecies which, by analogy, we have every right to believe will come to pass in due time. I suppose, on the same showing, this will prove that a great part of existing Scripture has not yet been written.

I do not think, among all his wealth of Scriptural reference, the learned lecturer mentions the first comprehensive basal prophecy in Gen. iii, 15, which includes in its opening words the religious history of mankind, then the final victory of Christ, and, in the last phrase, Christ's death at Calvary. Here are three fairly "definite propositions" revealed beforehand by God and fulfilled in their course.

At the top of p. 174 the lecturer refers to a most important point in citing three passages from Isaiah, in which Jehovah elects to stand or fall on His *unique* ability to foretell the future. Denying the prophetic element in Scripture, in the sense of definite prediction, is really to deny to God the very ground on which He bases His claim to superiority over the idols. Any of us can prophecy what happened last week in the sense of philosophising about it. These Isaiah passages, to which we may add ch. xlv, 21, touch the very core of the matter, and deserve careful study.

Mr. R. DUNCAN said: I desire to express my warm appreciation of this most helpful paper. At the same time, and in the hope of receiving light in the matter from the lecturer's observations, I would mention two instances of, to me, seeming difficulty in relation to specific predictions:—

(1) As to the fate of Damascus, which, as we all know, still survives as a capital city, although Isaiah, looking into the future, said (ch. xvii, 1): "Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap." It is only the other day, however, that a sign was, perhaps, given that this prediction slumbers not, part of the city having been destroyed by shell fire in the fighting arising out of the Druse rebellion.

(2) As to the final destiny of Egypt, which Isaiah (ch. xix, 23-25), pictures as one of happy association with Israel and Assyria under the blessing of the Lord of Hosts, whereas Joel, speaking likewise, as one would judge, of the time of the end, says, "Egypt shall be a desolation."

REPLY OF LECTURER.

When my subject was assigned to me—I did not choose it myself—I soon recognized that it was far too big for a mere paper like this. It would take a volume, and a fairly large one at that, to do it justice. It was no surprise to me, therefore, to find that some of the speakers have referred to predictions not mentioned in the paper. Indeed, I have not dealt with all the passages noted by myself.

The prediction "a virgin shall conceive" was purposely passed over, because I was anxious to concentrate on passages whose meaning is not seriously disputed. You are probably aware that it is contended the word here used is not the one which strictly means "virgin"—*Bethoolah*—but *Almah*, which, it is held, may mean a married woman. So far as I can make out, this word seems to correspond to our English "maid," which may have more than one meaning, but used absolutely would be readily understood to mean strictly virgin. Fuerst, in his "Lexicon," asserts that *Almah* can be used of a young married woman, yet, while giving several references to passages where it is used of those not married, the only reference he gives as applying to one who is married is—the passage in dispute!

In reply to Mr. Duncan, I take it that Damascus is used for the Syrian power of which it was the centre, and not merely for the city itself. In the same way Egypt stands for the power rather than for the land, and both these powers have been desolated.

The prediction (Isa. xix, 23-25) which couples Egypt and Assyria with Israel is very remarkable, as indicating that the two powers which had oppressed God's people will in the end be found on the Lord's side.

Reference has been made to our Lord's cry, "I thirst," being uttered "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." It would, I think, be a mistake to suppose that our Lord uttered words or did actions merely in order that they might correspond to ancient sayings. Rather is it the other way. The sayings were entrusted to the prophets, because the Divine Wisdom had ordained that so, and only so, should be carried out the plan of Salvation.

As to the "Prot-Evangelium," the promise of Gen. iii, 15, there are two points worth noting: (1) Elsewhere where "seed" is spoken of, it is the seed of a man; here, and here only, it is "her seed," the seed of a woman, a most unusual phrase. (2) The use of the English "it" is a little unfortunate; the Hebrew word may stand for either neuter or masculine, but the context so clearly refers to a Person that it would be better to read "He shall bruise."

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

Lieut.-Colonel G. MACKINLAY wrote: I regard the paper as very useful. It follows a good and careful method of examining Holy Scripture. In Ps. cxxii, 6, we are told: "They shall prosper that love Thee," and this is an utterance which is being fulfilled upon us to-day for our kindness to the Jewish people. Daniel, speaking by the Holy Spirit (xii, 4), gave as a sign of the last days that "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Again, in the New Testament, we have the prediction that "grievous wolves" shall enter the Church (Acts xx, 29). Has not this been proved true?

Major L. M. DAVIES wrote: I wish to say how heartily I agree with the lecturer's concluding words, to the effect that "The

Predictive Element in Holy Scripture is a part . . . of the hallmark which stamps the whole Bible as the 'fine gold' of God's Word, not the dross of men's imaginings." In the Bible alone, among the religious books of the world, do we find the phenomenon of true prophecy—predictions indubitably fulfilled long after the last possible date for their writing. My own studies are constantly bringing before me the fact that the Bible teems with prophecies which can be shown to have been fulfilled long after their writing. As a geologist, for instance, I have been peculiarly struck by the fact that we have, in 2 Pet. iii, a most perfect summary, written eighteen centuries before its rise, of our modern unproved and unprovable Doctrine of Uniformity, together with a statement of the effect which the acceptance of that doctrine as science would have upon belief in the literal Second Advent. This prediction has only been fulfilled in our own day.

But who could deny that the Book of Daniel was completely written before the time of our Lord? Yet Daniel, in predicting the rebuilding of Jerusalem, foretold that that same rebuilt city and its Temple would be destroyed *after* the "cutting off" of the Messiah (Dan. ix; cf. *vv.* 25 and 26). Now the rebuilt city had not yet been destroyed when our Lord was on earth; but it *was* destroyed *after* His rejection and crucifixion.

Yet not at once. Many an offer of forgiveness and mercy was given to His murderers before the final disaster came upon them; but finally St. Paul wrote to indicate that their predicted obstinacy had sealed their predicted fate. "*The Wrath*," said he, had come upon them to the uttermost. This use of the definite article (1 Thess. ii, 16) pointed the readers of his epistle back to all the then unfulfilled prophecies—in Deuteronomy and Daniel—which were soon afterwards so remarkably fulfilled to the letter. Yet St. Paul did not live to see them fulfilled. He was beheaded by Nero, while Vespasian and Titus made good the words in the Book of Daniel, and the peculiarly significant predictions in the still more ancient Book of Deuteronomy. Critics themselves, I believe, allow that Deuteronomy was written some 700 years before Christ, yet Deut. xxviii found its fulfilment only some 70 years after the birth of Christ. That chapter, from *v.* 49 onwards, which described the culminating disasters which should come upon the Jews, and had never

been fulfilled when Daniel wrote—nor even in our Lord's day—and so must be put in parallel with Daniel's predictions regarding the great national disaster which was to follow the cutting off of the Messiah.

So note its peculiarly apt character. The land was to be covered by the members of a hostile and domineering foreign nation, who should on all hands dispossess and oppress the Jews before finally destroying them by war. How improbable this must have seemed before the event! For normally it is the war which precedes and makes possible the occupation of the land. Yet the prediction was exactly fulfilled nevertheless. The Romans did occupy the land, and they oppressed the Jews on all hands until the latter finally rose in revolt. And how truly the subsequent war answered to Moses' description of it! According to his prediction, that war, unlike any previous Jewish war (*e.g.* of the Maccabees), was to be peculiarly a war of *sieges* all through the land of Judea. And so it proved. The Jews were besieged through all their land, for this war, arising out of a prior occupation, was not a war of movements and battles, but a war of resistance to the last by men shut up within their walled towns throughout the land they once called their own. And the result—they were scattered through all the world, as the same most ancient prophecy declared (*v.* 64). *Yet*—they have remained distinct to this day, as was also foretold.

A Book which teems with true prophecies—of which the above only mentions one or two—is, I firmly believe, not a work of man, but of God.